

## **GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF THE WARD INITIATIVES FUND**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Ward Initiative Fund of £625 per member per annum of the four year term, exists to enhance the capacity of members to undertake their community representation role. The fund does not form part of the Scheme of Members' Allowances.
- 1.2 These guidelines set out the prohibitions on the use of the fund, but does not cover all the authorised uses to which the fund may be put. It is hoped that members will be innovative in producing proposals for use of the fund and will share their experiences of the outcomes of any new uses.
- 1.3 Members should note that they cannot access the fund directly. All payments will be made by officers and are subject to the usual internal controls on expenditure and the prohibitions listed below.
- 1.4 Members should not raise unrealistic expectations to potential beneficiaries.
- 1.5 Members are advised not to incur expenditure themselves and then seek to recover their costs from the fund without first being assured that such costs are refundable.
- 1.6 Where possible, Members should provide invoices, quotations or receipts to accompany any request.
- 1.7 Before payments from the fund may be authorised, members are required to sign an undertaking not to use it for improper purposes.

### **2. PROHIBITIONS ON THE USE OF THE FUND**

- 2.1 The fund may not be used for any purpose for which the Borough Council could not itself incur expenditure. Nor may it be used for any purpose which would breach the Council's constitution or policy framework.
- 2.2 This prohibition includes:
  - expenditure which would be in breach of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

- expenditure which would be in breach of any statutory provision relating to elections and referendums
- expenditure which would be contrary to the Council's commitments to local people

### 2.3 Examples of prohibited expenditure include:

- anything which is, or is liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Anything published with financial support from the fund may not include reference to political affiliations, use political slogans, expressly advocate policies as being of a particular political party or directly attack policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals
- no publications or events shall be funded which are issued or held during the period between the notice of an ordinary Borough Council election and the election itself, nor will support be given during such period in relation to a ward in which a by-election is to be held. For other local, parliamentary or European parliamentary elections the prohibition relates to any event or publication which gives, or could be misrepresented as giving any publicity whatsoever to a candidate at the election.
- no publications or events shall be funded which appear designed to influence local people in deciding whether or not to sign a petition or vote in a referendum for an elected Mayor
- any request which would directly benefit a sole individual
- any request for monies to be spent on consumables or trips
- any request that could be considered as 'Treating'
- any request where the beneficiary has received or is set to receive funding from any other scheme of the Borough Council or County Council.
- The Ward Initiative Fund will not substitute itself as a provider / funder of services when another public provider cuts such a service.

### 2.4 Determinations to withhold funding will be made by the Head of Democratic and Legal Services and shall be in writing detailing the basis of the determination. Appeals against a determination to withhold funding will be heard by the Standards Advisory Committee, advised by the Monitoring Officer, within one month of any such appeal by a member.

### 3. AUTHORISED USES OF THE FUND

3.1 Subject to the prohibitions noted in Section 2 the fund may be used for any purpose which in the opinion of the member concerned will enhance their community representation role. Such purposes will include:

- providing information to constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward
- seeking the views of constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward
- training for any purpose connected with members' roles for which no provision has been made in the members' training programme
- any other purpose which in the opinion of the member will enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of their ward or part thereof.

3.2 Individual ward members may pool their fund allocations together if they feel that a scheme would benefit residents of more than one ward. One or more ward members can also join with one or more ward councillors from an adjacent ward or wards to fund a project, provided it can be shown that the project benefits residents from both or all wards concerned. Individual members are responsible for ensuring funds are distributed in an equitable manner.

### 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

4.1 The Head of Democratic and Legal Services and such other officers delegated by this post-holder shall have responsibility for administering the fund.

4.2 All requests must be submitted to the delegated officers to be assessed and authorised.

4.3 The annual allowance will run alongside the four year term between local elections. Any monies not spent as at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, can be rolled over into the following financial year. However, in the fourth year, any balances left in the fund and not spent before the deadline imposed, are considered lost and will be absorbed within the Council's general balances.

4.4 Reports will be compiled and published from time to time.

5. UNDERTAKING

I declare that I shall follow these guidelines in my use of the Fund and shall not use it for any purpose contrary to law or otherwise incompatible with my role as a member of Kettering Borough Council.

Signed by .....

Name .....

Dated .....